SECTION 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The President's fiscal year (FY) 1998 budget requests $2.38 billion for meteorological services and supporting research. Of the total requested, $2.03 billion is designated for operations and $350 million for supporting research. The FY 1998 budget proposal, by agency, is shown in Table 1.1.

As in prior years, the Departments of Commerce (DOC), Defense (DOD), and Transportation (DOT) are projected to receive approximately 92 percent of the funds. The distribution among the three departments remain the same with DOC claiming the largest portion at 51 percent and DOD and DOT following with approximately 21.6 percent and 18.8 percent, respectively. All other federal agencies account for the remaining 8.8 percent.

In comparison to the $2.33 billion appropriated in FY 1997, the FY 1998 request represents an increase of 1.9 percent. DOC's request represents an increase of 1.7 percent, DOD's an increase of 1.4 percent, and DOT's an increase of 3.6 percent. The DOD's overall FY 1997 to 1998 increase includes the continued decline in the Army's funding levels for operations and supporting research (a combined decrease of 10.3 percent). In addition, the Air Force's Defense Meteorological Satellite Program request for operations and supporting research decreases by 7.2 percent. On the other hand, the Navy and Air Force requests for operations and supporting research increase by 10.7 and 1.2 percent, respectively.

Although FY 1998 funding levels for operations in the three departments continues to increase, albeit single-digit percentage increases, funding for supporting research decreases in all three departments when compared to FY 1997 levels. The largest decrease of 62 percent occurs in the DOT's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) overall budget increase is less than one-half percent. The Department of Agriculture realizes a small increase of 2.1 percent. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's request reflects a decrease of 18.1 percent.

Table 1.1. Federal Budget for Meteorological Operations and Supporting Research, FY 1998 (in thousands of dollars)

Agency	Operations	% of TOTAL	Supporting Research	% of TOTAL	TOTAL	% of TOTAL
Agriculture	$12,553	0.6	$15,591	4.5	$28,144	1.2
Commerce	1,132,490	55.9	80,240	22.9	1,212,730	51.0
Defense	434,746	21.4	78,558	22.4	513,304	21.6
Interior	800	0.0	0	0.0	800	0.0
Transportation	441,537	21.8	6,317	1.8	447,854	18.8
EPA	0	0.0	5,700	1.6	5,700	0.2
NASA	4,459	0.2	163,750	46.8	168,209	7.1
NRC	298	0.0	0	0.0	298	0.0
TOTAL	2,026,884	100.0	350,156	100.0	2,377,039	100.0

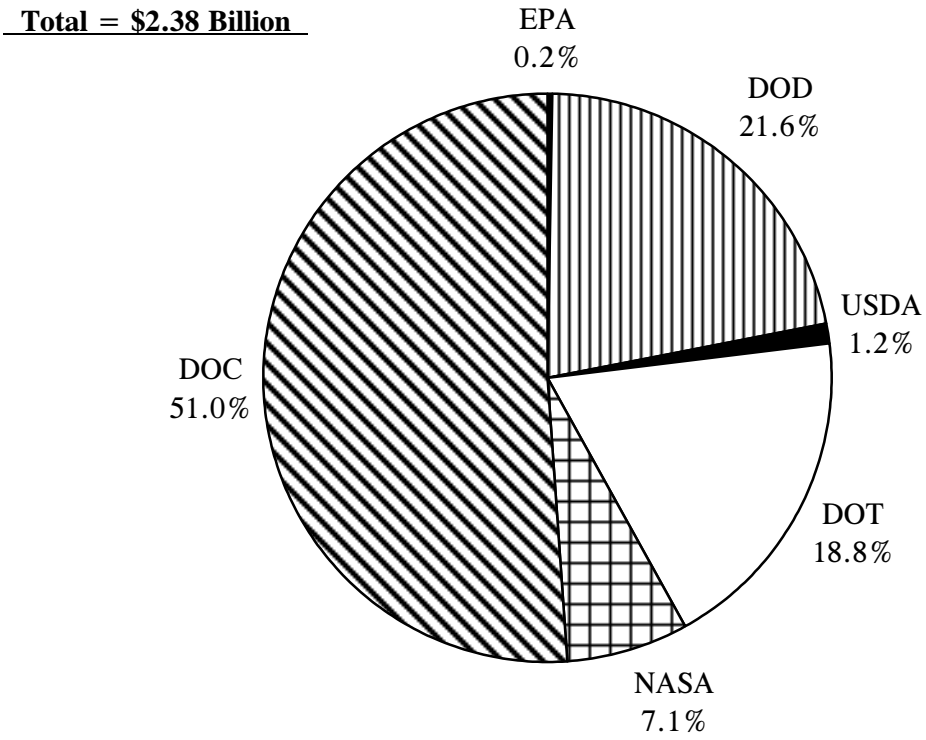

Figure 1.1 Agency Percent of Total Federal Budget for Meteorological Operations and Supporting Research, FY 1998

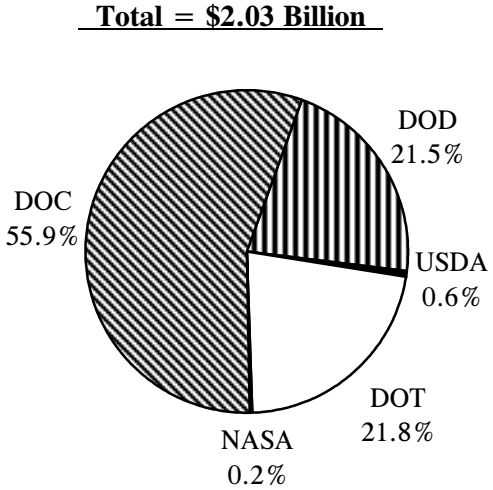

Figure 1.2 Agency Percent of Federal Budget for Meteorological Operations, FY 1998

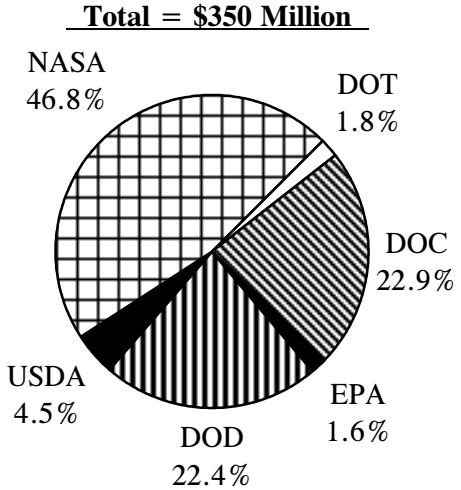

Figure 1.3 Agency Percent of Federal Budget for Supporting Research, FY 1998

Figure 1.1 depicts each agency's proportion of the proposed FY 1998 federal budget for meteorological operations and supporting research. Each agency's portion of the proposed funding for meteorological operations is shown in Figure 1.2. Of the $2.03 billion requested for meteorological operations, DOC, DOD, and DOT account for 99 percent of the funds. Figure 1.3 depicts each agency's portion of the proposed federal supporting research budget. Unlike operations, DOC, DOD, and NASA account for the major share (92 percent) of the supporting research budget.

All agencies project a personnel total of 20,833 full-time equivalent (FTE) to be employed in federal meteorological operations in FY 1998. This figure represents a decrease of 3.7 percent from the 21,638 FTE employed in FY 1997.

Major Programs of DOC, DOD, and DOT

The required funding for major weather system acquisition programs for DOC, DOD, and DOT continues to decline from the previous year's level.

Next Generation Weather Radar (NEXRAD). The NEXRAD Program which began in FY 1981 was responsible for procurement, installation, and operation of the Weather Surveillance Radar-1988 Doppler (WSR-88D). The first limited production WSR-88D system was installed at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma in May 1990 and commissioned 4 years later in February 1994. The original program plan called for a total of 161 radars. In response to a National Research Council report, three additional radars were added and raised the total to 164 radar sites.

By agency, as of June 1997, the DOC/National Weather Service has 117 commissioned sites, the DOD/USAF has 18 commissioned, and the DOT/FAA has 2 commissioned sites. Five other sites are dedicated to supporting maintenance, training, and testing activities.

Automated Surface Observing System (ASOS). The ASOS program, began in 1983, as a joint development effort between the DOC, DOD, and DOT/FAA. Installation of ASOS units started in 1991. As of August 1997, a total of 952 units have been purchased. The NWS has purchased 313 units, installed 287 units, and accepted 273 units. The FAA has purchased 539 units, installed 522 units, and accepted 513 units. The Navy has purchased 77 units, installed 76 units, and accepted 76 units. The Air Force has purchased 23 units, installed 21 units, and accepted 21 units. Collectively, the NWS and FAA have commissioned 405 units--NWS 230 and FAA 175.

Automated Weather Information Systems (AWIS). The DOC, DOD, and DOT require AWISs to facilitate the collection, processing, and interpretation of meteorological data. AWISs are being procured to provide an automated, high-speed, user-friendly man/machine interface to access and process large volumes of sophisticated meteorological data. AWIS supports the timely production of accurate and geographically precise warnings, forecasts, and special tailored products. They also provide the communications capability for expeditious product dissemination.

Major agency systems classified as AWISs are: NOAA's Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System (AWIPS), the FAA's Weather and Radar Processor (WARP), the Air Force's Automated Weather Distribution System (AWDS), and the Navy's Naval Oceanographic Data Distribution and Expansion System (NODDES) and Navy Integrated Tactical Environmental Subsystem (NITES).

In February 1997, the Secretary of Commerce approved the limited production AWIPS which authorized NOAA to procure and install 21 systems in calendar year 1997. A decision on the remaining AWIPS units will be sought after the operational test and evaluation of AWIPS Build 3. Commissioning of AWIPS Build 4 units is expected in 1998.

Other Agency Programs

For FY 1998, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) requested $28.14 million for meteorological operations and supporting research. Operationally, the USDA supports specialized weather observation networks and also conducts an active supporting research program to ensure an abundance of high-quality agricultural commodities while minimizing the adverse effects of agriculture on the environment.

The Department of Interior's (DOI) FY 1998 request is $800,000 primarily to support the Bureau of Land Management's remote automatic weather station (RAWS) program.

The budget request for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) decreases to $5.7 million to provide user-appropriate and scientifically credible air-quality meteorological programs to support regulatory applications.

NASA's FY 1998 request is $168.2 million primarily for supporting research associated with the Mission to Planet Earth (MTPE) program. These funding levels are composed of the estimated meteorology share of the supporting research and analysis programs, to include the Earth Observing

System (EOS) and Earth Probe instruments, EOS science, and the EOS Data and Information Systems (EOSDIS).

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) request for $298,000 is mainly for operations. The NRC will dedicate these funds to obtain and analyze meteorological data and information related to the safe operation of nuclear facilities, and the protection of the environment, public health, and safety.

Federal Coordination Activities

In response to a National Research Council report and recommendation, the National Aviation Weather Program Council (NAWPC) tasked the Aviation Weather Joint Action Group (JAG) to prepare a strategic plan for aviation weather. The JAG completed and subsequently distributed ***The National Aviation Weather Strategic Plan*** (August 1997). As a follow up to the strategic plan, the JAG is actively preparing an implementation plan.

Acting upon an ICMSSR recommendation, the OFCM prepared and developed a proposal to streamline the interagency council, committee, and working group coordinating structure. In April 1997, the Federal Coordinator briefed ICMSSR on the proposal and received acceptance. The final step is to seek FCMSSR approval at the September 1997 meeting. The streamlining will reduce the number of groups within OFCM's coordinating structure from 46 to 34.

In March 1997, OFCM hosted the 51st Interdepartmental Hurricane Conference (IHC) in Miami, Florida. The 52nd IHC is scheduled for January 26-30, 1998 in Clearwater Beach, Florida.

The FY 1998 featured article is entitled "*Owning the Weather--An Army Force Multiplier*" and was provided by the Department of the Army.